FAMILY LIFE

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Premarital Experience No Help In Sexual Adjustment After Marriage

A PRELIMINARY REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH, AIFR

Neither delayed marriage nor lack of previous sexual experience is a hindrance to a woman's good sexual adjustment in marriage.

This is one of the conclusions from an extensive and detailed study of honeymoons, which the Institute undertook last year with the aid of a financial grant from the *Ladies Home Journal*. From 15,000 distributed, approximately 2,000 questionnaires were collected from married women representing nearly every part of the United States, but predominantly of college level in education. Among scores of questions asked were a number that concerned the attainment of orgasm response, and of virginity or non-virginity at the time of the wedding. Since the questionnaires were answered anonymously and returned by mail, there was no reason for not answering frankly, and a perusal of the questionnaires leaves no room for doubt that the women were telling the whole truth in their replies.

One question dealt with attainment of orgasm after the wedding: at the beginning, or after days, weeks, months or years. At the start, 28% of the virgins and 39% of the non-virgins experienced orgasm. This is a rather astounding picture. The first figure agrees well with other findings, but one would not expect that such a small proportion of the non-virgins would attain complete sexual satisfaction at once, since the experience was not new to them. It bears out the clinical observation that a large part of the pre-marital sexual experience of young women is neurotic rather than normal.

In less than a year after marriage, an additional 40% of the virgins are experiencing orgasm, but only half that many (22%) of the non-virgins have succeeded in attaining orgasm, if they did not start with it. When we add those who attained orgasm after "years" of marriage, we find that this group includes 18% of the original virgins and 24% of the original non-virgins. Adding all the percentages together to learn how many of these educated women *ever* attained orgasm

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in their marriages, we get 86% of the virgins, 85% of the non-virgins.

In short, the number of virgins who attain orgasm immediately at the beginning of marriage is a little smaller than that of the non-virgins—any other finding would indeed be surprising; but they pick up more rapidly, so that their final adjustment in marriage is equally good; and they do not make the complaint that some of the non-virgins make, in comments added to their questionnaire answers, that both bride and groom wished that they had not had any premarital experiments which took the edge off of the honeymoon if indeed they did not cloud the entire marriage.

When these college-educated women are compared as to both virginity and age at marriage, some interesting findings appear. Of those who married under the age of 30, it is found that 28% of the virgins and 39% of the non-virgins had immediate orgasms. Contrast with these the women who married after the age of 30: the virgins had 37% orgasms at first, the non-virgins 41%—not much difference. The older non-virgins did slightly better than the younger non-virgins; but the older virgins did better than the younger virgins; they did virtually as well as the younger non-virgins.

These figures certainly give no warrant for believing that an older woman, who has had no sexual experience, is going to be handicapped in making a satisfactory sexual adjustment in marriage. It seems likely that maturity is a larger and more long-continued factor in satisfactory sexual adjustment, than has been generally recognized.

If we take the record of the older and the younger groups during the first year of marriage, the same relationships appear. By the end of 12 months after the wedding, in the younger group, 67% of the virgins and 63% of the non-virgins were having orgasms. In the older (over 30 years of age) group, 63% of the virgins and 59% of the non-virgins were having orgasms.

Whatever disadvantages there may be about delayed marriage, it does not appear that, for women, the likelihood of difficulty in making a sexual adjustment is one of them. At any age, it appears that previous sexual experience of a woman is no help to her in making good sexual adjustment in her marriage. ●

Notes From the AIFR

MORE THAN 100 persons registered for the Institute's 14th annual summer workshop in the techniques of counseling, held during the first half of August. Clergymen made up slightly more than half the number, followed by counselors, social workers, physicians, nurses, attorneys, college professors ,and many other classifications. Five of the registrants had attended one of the earlier workshops and found it so valuable that they wanted to repeat the experience. Together with Institute trainees and graduate students from the collaborating colleges, who were privileged to attend, the total number of persons in the group was

above 120. This year marked the first time that the workshop has carried approved graduate academic credit in both sociology and psychology, through co-operation with Chapman College and Pepperdine College.

COUNSELING in the 1960's, a 2,000 word abstract of Dr. Popenoe's opening address, has been mimeographed as No. 531 on the Institute's list of publications, and is available at 10c per copy.

Educational Notes

SOCIAL AND SEXUAL behavior of 600 teenagers who came to New York City medical clinics because they had or thought they might have a venereal disease, has been studied intensively during the last two years by Dr. Celia S. Deschin. Of the total number, only 10% had a good knowledge of the venereal diseases; only 42% had ever heard or read *anything* about these diseases. "The educational and cultural level of t he interviewees was, for the most part, impoverished" but most of them came from homes that "reflected considerable family stability." Copies of the 168-page reported are available at $2.50 from the American Social Health Assn., 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y.

HOME ECONOMICS curriculum in many high schools was declared to be out of date, at the annual meeting of the AHEA. Dr. Patricia A. Tripple of the University of Nevada reminded hearers that "half of all married women will have a youngest child in the first grade when the mother is only 32 years of age with the prospect that she will live 40 years more," and she told her audience that "you have not altered the teaching of homemaking to help your students prepare for the life you are living. Instead you have them looking through rose-colored glasses at the home life led by our grandmothers."

MORE THAN a thousand parent cooperatives are now reported to exist, in 19 states and four provinces of North America, to provide children with nursery school facilities under economical and otherwise favorable conditions. This is the report of President Carolyn Hawkins of the American Council of Parent Cooperatives.

PREINDUCTION HEALTH AND HUMAN RELATIONS, a book edited by Esther Emerson Sweeney and Roy E. Dickerson, was prepared to give teenagers of both sexes a fundamental education on mental, physical, social, and spiritual health. Remaining copies are now being sold at 50c each by the American Social Health Assn., 1790 Broadway, New York, N.Y.

BUYERS' CHOICE, is a new motion picture of the theme, "The Christian family in rapid social change." Preview prints and other information may be had from Family Films, 5283 Santa Monica blvd., Hollywood 38, Calif.

FATHERS who desert their children will henceforth be listed in a Central Registry, under the terms of a law enacted by the 1961 session of the New York State legislature. The State Social Welfare dept. will maintain the registry at its Albany headquarters to assist its own officials and local welfare agents and police to track down deserting fathers and force them to support their families.

Research Notes

NINE COUNTRIES now have better records than the United States, in infant mortality, according to a Children's Bureau analysis. They are Sweden, Netherlands, Australia, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Denmark, New Zealand, and Finland. In the U.S., Rhode Island has the lowest rate of infant mortality, Mississippi the highest.

BETHANY CONFERENCE is a new organization, under Roman Catholic auspices, to give the same sort of help to single women (usually those over 30 years of age) that the Cana Conferences give to married couples. Coordinating secretary is Miss Margaret Kelly, Bethany Conference, 315 E. 72d st., New York 21, N.Y., and it is reported that family leaders from 30 states and seven countries have already written for information as to how such a group may be organized.

VENEREAL DISEASE rates continue to rise in the U.S., nearly half of the reported cases being in the 15 to 24 years age group. Infectious syphilis has increased about 200% in the last four years. Public Health Service estimates 60,000 new cases of syphilis, 1,000,000 of gonorrhea yearly. "Experience has proved," says the annual report of the American Social Health Assn. (1790 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y.), "that although the venereal diseases can be cured by anti-biotics, VD control can not rest on cure alone. The venereal diseases are, in effect, behavior disorders and can be prevented and controlled only as such."

EIGHT MILLION CHILDREN are estimated to be living with one parent or none, in the U.S., because of breakups, divorces, or illegal unions.

MORE THAN 30 children under the age of 10 commit suicide each year; 50 more in the 10-14 years bracket kill themselves. Suicide is the second cause of death among college students in the U.S.A. New York health authorities calculate that for every completed child suicide, there are 50 attempts. "The majority of child suicides are from unhappy homes, broken by death or divorce," opines Dr. Harry Bakwin, psychiatrist who specializes in the problems of children.

COST OF obstetrical care has risen 135.9% in the last 20 years, according to the Maternity Center Assn. This is the largest rise in all medical care classifications.

WOMAN is more likely to have a troubled pregnancy if she was dominated by her parents, especially her mother, said Dr. Nicholas Destounis of Halifax, N.S., in an address to the third World Congress of Psychiatry in Montreal.

MARRIAGES in the U.S. in 1960 totaled about 1,528,000, a slight increase over the two previous years. Canadian marriages were slightly off and divorces slightly higher than previously.

PATTERN of age at first marriage in the U.S. is now closer to the Asian pattern than to that of Europe, says the Population Reference Bureau (1507 M st., NW., Washington 5, D.C.) Last year more men married at 21 than at any other age; more women at 18. Men are now marrying about three years earlier and women two years earlier than at the turn of the century. Canada comes closer to the U.S. pattern than does any other Western country.

Around the World

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FAMILY ORGANIZATIONS, at its general assembly, held this year in Madrid in the middle of July, reported that it now consists of 237 members in 44 countries. The AIFR has long been an active member of the Union.

PAKISTAN now has 127 centers providing birth control help.

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK in the Philippines has been observed annually since 1948. The Philippine Federation of Christian Churches is pursuing an active educational program and held last winter a National Training Institute on Home and Family Life for professionals, especially home economics supervisors. The Federation's Department of Home and Family Life (1648 Taft ave., Manila) has recently opened a Family Relations Center.

NEW ZEALAND has set up a government-sponsored training course for marriage counselors.

RELATION of teen-agers to the older generations was the topic of the 48th annual session of Semaines Sociales de France, held in Reims, July 11-16.

INDIAN state government of Maharashtra has announced that all expenses for medicines, surgical operations, and hospital care will henceforth be free to patients who are being sterilized either by vasectomy (men) or salpingectomy (women). This is pursuant to the energetic family-planning program which that State, among others in India, is carrying out.

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Inexpensive Pamphlets

NINE TO TWELVE, Pp. 18, free on request to Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 1 Madison ave., New York, N.Y. —Dealing with pre-teens.

THE MOTHER WHO WORKS OUTSIDE THE HOME, by Violet Weingarten. Pp. 25, price 40c, price 40c from Child Study Assn. of America, 9 E. 89th st., New York 28, N.Y.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL on menstruation, valuable kit free on request to Tampax Inc., Educational Dept., 161 E. 42d st., New York 17, N.Y.— Intended for teachers but also available to parents.

PROGRAM IDEAS on mental health for parent-teacher groups, Pp. 24, price 30c from National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 700 N. Rush st., Chicago 11, Ills.

ON BEING A PARENT of a handicapped child, by Benjamin Spock. Pp. 20, price 25c from Natl. Soc. for Crippled Children and Adults, 2023 W. Ogden ave., Chicago 12, Ills.

THINKING STRAIGHT ABOUT DRINKING, by Herman E. Krimmel. Pp. 24, price 30c from Natl. Congress of Parents and Teachers, 700 N. Rush st., Chicago 11, Ills.

PUBLICATIONS and films on play programs and family life education (price list), free on request to Play Schools Assn., 120 W. 57th st., New York 19, N.Y.

IF YOUR CHILD MARRIES A ROMAN CATHOLIC, by J. Tremaine Copplestone. Pp. 6, price 25c per dozen or $1.50 per hundred from Service Dept., General Board of Education, P.O. Box 871, Nashville 2, Tenn.

PUBLICATIONS on marriage and the family, Pp. 16, price list free on request to Family Life Bureau, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1312 Massachusetts ave., NW., Washington 5, D.C.

DIABETICS UNKNOWN, by Groff Conklin. Pp. 28, price 25c from Pub-

lic Affairs Pamphlets (No. 312), 22 E. 38th st., New York 16, N.Y., 1961.

COURTSHIP ANALYSIS, by Gelolo McHugh, specimen set including counselor's guide, 35c from Family Life Publications, 6725 College Station, Durham, N.C.

THE PARENT AND THE COUNSELOR, by Ralph F. Berdie et al. Pp. 36, price 25c from State of Minnesota Dept. of Education, St. Paul 1, Minn.

DATING PROBLEMS CHECK LIST, by Gelolo McHugh, specimen set including counselor's guide, 35c from Family Life Pubs., 6725 College Station, Durham, N.C.

WHEN CHILDREN MOVE FROM SCHOOL TO SCHOOL, Pp. 36, price 75c from Assn. for Childhood Education International, 3615 Wisconsin ave. NW., Washington 16, D.C.

Weddings Cost Too Much

Each year 1½ million weddings are performed in the U.S. and the average cost is $3,000 per couple, says Philip Reaves in the May, 1961, issue of *Marriage*. "One recent survey of 1,000 weddings showed that the majority of middle-income families spent one-fifth of their gross annual income on a daughter's wedding. A survey by Drs. Herbert J. Miles and Ray F. Koonce of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn., found that some $6,000 a year families ran wedding bills of $10,000 which they paid off on the installment plan like a new car." Friends get caught in the maelstrom, as well as does the family of the bride. Many brides-to-be now have five or six showers. Much of all this represents brainwashing by commercial interests, the author says.

Other Books Received

AS YOUR CHILD GROWS; the first 18 months, by Katherine M. Wolf with Aline B. Auerbach. Pp. 32 (no index), price $1.25 from Sterling Pub. Co., 419 Fourth ave., New York 16, N.Y. —Hard cover edition of a popular pamphlet of the Child Study Assn.

HOW TO MAKE THINGS OUT OF PAPER, by Walter Sperling. Pp. 124, price $2.50 from Sterling Pub. Co., 419 Fourth ave., New York 16, N.Y.

PREVENTION, TREATMENT, CONTROL OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY through group work services, proceedings of the Annual Spring Conference, In-service training dept., New York City Youth Board. Pp. 81 (large), paper covers, no index, free on application to the N.Y. City Youth Board, 79 Madison ave., New York 16, N.Y., 1961.

YOUR CHILD STEPS OUT, by Edgar S. Bley. Pp. 124, paper covers, no index, price $1 from Sterling Pub. Co., 419 Fourth ave., New York, N.Y., 1960.—Reprint of booklet published in 1955 under the title of "Launching your preschooler."

AT YOUR BEST FOR BIRTH AND AFTERWARDS, by Eileen Montgomery. Pp. 59 (paper covers, no index), price $1.75 from Williams and Wilkins Co., Mount Royal and Guilford aves., Baltimore 2, Md., 1961.—This booklet, imported from England, gives a practical and well-illustrated discussion of preparation for childbirth.

A HANDBOOK OF EMOTIONAL ILLNESS AND TREATMENT, by Robert C. Robertiello. Pp. 159 (no index), price $3.95 from Argonaut Books, Larchmont, N.Y., 1961.—"What every intelligent layman and many professionals will want to know."

NEW BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

PERSUASION AND HEALING, by Jerome D. Frank. Pp. 282, price $5.50 from the Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore 18, Md., 1961.

The American psychotherapeutic scene is characterized by a multitude of conflicting theories and methods, but all of them are attempts to heal through persuasion, says Dr. Frank, and all share features not only with each other but also with many other forms of persuasion and healing—the shaman in primitive societies, the religious revivalist, the "faith healer" the Communist thought reformer ("brainwashing"), the "miracle cure," and the "placebo effect" when the physician gives his patient a pill made of sugar, to name but a few. Much if not all of the demonstrated effectiveness of these different forms may be due to features that all have in common rather than to those that distinguish them from each other, Dr. Frank argues, though this does not necessarily mean that all therapies are interchangeable! He gives a broad review of the efficiency of various procedures and the changes that are taking place in the whole concept of how to "persuade" people. Some degree of emotional involvement of the client is needed, it appears; and it is best to have a definite time limit set in advance. The duration of counseling is steadily being made shorter. Success is largely the result of the client's expectation of success and is promoted by his approval of the counselor's personality, which should be characterized by "self-confidence, energy, and controlled emotional warmth." Different forms of therapy differ somewhat in the speed of their immediate action, but carefully controlled research indicates that they all come out at the same place, so to speak—that is, after five years the percentage of clients helped, and the extent to which they have been helped, seems to be the same in each case. All evidence "emphasizes the desirability of exploiting group forces more fully to produce and sustain therapeutic change. This means not only the use of group therapeutic methods, but the inclusion of persons important to the patient in his treatment," e.g., the family. Dr. Frank (professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University) has produced a very important book, written with a minimum of jargon and technicality. No one concerned with helping people in their troubles (as is, for instance, every clergyman), can afford to overlook it.

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THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR, ed. by Albert Ellis and Albert Abarbanel. 2 vols., Pp. 1059, price $30 from Hawthorn Books, 70 Fifth ave., New York 11, N.Y., 1961.

This is the first comprehensive authoritative encyclopedia of sex that has appeared in America. Several German encyclopedias, issued a generation ago, were of high quality, and a couple of minor ones in the English language came out late. This one is therefore to be welcomed. A hundred writers have contributed to it, and many topics are included that have hitherto been little known. Inevitably the quality of the contributions varies

widely; a few are little more than puerile declamations, some are perfunctory, others admirable essays, others are valuable summaries of research. Professional readers will not think that the choice of writers is always what they themselves would have preferred. On the whole, however, the encyclopedia is a good one and will be an indispensable book of professional reference, its spread limited only by the, no doubt necessary, high price.

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THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR, by Gerhard Lenski. Pp. 381, price $5.95 from Doubleday & Co., 575 Madison ave., New York 22, N.Y., 1961.

Taking a sample of Roman Catholics, Jews, Negro protestants, and white Protestants in Detroit, sociologist Lensky of the University of Michigan studied their differing patterns of family life, political, and economic values, with a resulting very interesting review. In all three of the Christian groups, those who attend church regularly have larger families than those who do not. Catholic mothers spank their children more often than do Protestant mothers, but also enjoy their children more. White Protestant churches tend to weaken kinship ties, substituting action in various special groups for the old-fashioned habit of visiting relatives. This, the author thinks, may incidentally be one factor in the higher divorce rate of the Protestants. The book, written in popular style, is crammed with suggestions and conclusions, many of which may be of continuing importance.

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WHAT A GIRL SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SEX, by Bernhardt S. Gottlieb, Bobbs Merrill, N.Y., 1961, 190 Pp., price $3.25.

In his foreword the author says: "I have attempted in this book to answer some of the questions which many girls between the ages of twelve and eighteen have asked me." The jacket of the book conveys the idea that it is a "must for every teenage girl," and of "inestimable value" for their parents and teachers. In the judgment of this reviewer it is only for those parents and teachers who are willing to expose a girl to many unsound ideas and risk her accepting them as especially reliable because they are asserted by a physician whose "special interest is the psychiatry of adolescence." In the space of this review only a few of these ideas can even be mentioned. "Dating," writes the author, "which leads to necking, making out, or petting is desirable and something you should look forward to" (P. 139). The import of this statement must be considered in the light of the description of "making out" as meaning "that the boy and girl touch and play with each others genitals while they are kissing and fondling." (P. 131). "Petting" according to the author, "has become an accepted practice among teenagers. Besides giving the girl all the sexual satisfaction she needs, it helps her to make a relationship with a boy. It gives her the experience of mingling with different types of boys, learning how to adjust to social situations and developing feelings of security and confidence. The girl who refuses to pet probably is unable to make any relationship with a boy" (p. 137). In describing what a seventeen-year-old told him about her petting experiences Dr. Gottlieb says:

"Of course, she insisted that he wear a condom . . . and under no circumstances would she permit any sexual intercourse to take place." (p. 131). The treatment of premarital relations between engaged couples, petting to orgasm, a boy's interest in sex, "soul-kissing," and other matters involves much which would rightly be considered by parents, teachers, and specialists in the area of sex education as not only inaccurate but highly dangerous in its import to the teen age girl. This reviewer feels that it is unfortunate to have in print a book which under the guise of telling a girl what she ought to know about sex advises behavior so likely to fan the embers of desire into the flame of passion so difficult, if not impossible, to control and so capable of serious damage, to say the least, to her and others. The fact that there is much that is valid and well said in these pages does not make up for this shortcoming.

—Roy E. Dickerson

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EXPLORING THE BASE FOR FAMILY THERAPY, ed. by Nathan W. Ackerman, Frances L. Beatman, and Sanford N. Sherman. Pp. 159, price $4 from Family Service Assn. of America, 215 Park ave., South, New York 3, N.Y., 1961.

Helping professions, say the editors of this collection of 13 papers, "have often reached a *cul de sac* in the treatment of individual social maladaptation, emotional disturbance, and mental illness," and they have been turning to a study of the family as a unit because it appeared that the individual members can best be understood and helped if their relations with all the others are also dealt with. This somewhat technical volume discusses ways in which this can be accomplished, and suggests also the necessity of preventive practice as well as remedial efforts. It is a milestone in the progress of the "helping professions" toward greater effectiveness.

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THE LISTENING HEART, by Jane Mayer. Pp. 281 (no index), price $3.95 from Crown Publishers, 419 Park ave. South, New York 16, N.Y., 1961.

Counseling by mail is being studied all over the world, as those concerned with helping people in trouble have faced the fact that most of the people who need help can not be reached at all unless by correspondence. Many psychologists and others have in the past felt that such an attempt was unjustifiable, but a great deal of experience has shown that it is often very successful, and no one has yet found that it harmed any more persons than are harmed by face-to-face counseling! In Europe this correspondence counseling is taken for granted and it is more and more being used in North America. Mrs. Mayer, a New York marriage counselor, gives in this book (edited by Lucy Freeman, a professional writer who has particularly interested herself in psychotherapy) the letters which she exchanged over a period of three years with a troubled and rebellious young widow in a New England village, with resulting great help. The story is interesting on its own account but should also encourage those with adequate training and willingness to accept the necessary limitations of the process, to give more help to the millions of men and women who could not see a counselor regularly in person.

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE STUDENT, ed. by Graham B. Blaine jr. and Charles C. McArthur. Pp. 254, price $4.95 from Appleton-Century-Crofts, 35 W. 32d st., New York 1, N.Y., 1961.

Harvard University keeps eight full-time psychiatrists busy with the problems of its students. The editors of this book are in the number, and present their own contributions together with a dozen others, present or former members of the staff. The book will interest primarily the psychologist, educator, social worker, or other professional, but will give any reader an idea of the difficulties some students face. "Over and over again," says one contributor, "one is impressed by the frequency with which unstable or insecure family relationships may be found accountable in large measure for the emotional disturbances experienced by the products of those homes."

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CHILDBIRTH WITH HYPNOSIS, by William S. Kroger. Pp. 216, (no index), price $3.95 from Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1961.

Hypnosis has long been used in connection with childbirth and Dr. Kroger (practising in Los Angeles) describes its value in producting "childbirth without tension and fear." He says 90% of expectant mothers can be put under some degree of hypnosis—a figure higher than that usually accepted. He recognizes many degrees, some of which are not much more than mere suggestion. He does not claim that all pain is eliminated; of his patients "less than 10% of the women can go through the entire course of labor and delivery of their babies without some chemical assistance." While absence of anesthesia is by no means the only measure of satisfactory results, it is interesting to note that women who have the training in preparation for childbirth in courses given at the American Institute of Family Relations, (with no hypnosis), do much better than that: more than one-third of the women delivered spontaneously, without anesthetics, though of course they could have had such help at any time that the woman wanted it or the obstetrician thought it desirable. Dr. Kroger and his collaborator give a good picture of their procedures but most persons familiar with the subject will probably prefer the educational preparation and physical exercises so widely used now in all civilized countries, with no appeal to hypnosis.

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THE CONQUEST OF TENSION, by Richard H. Hoffmann and A. W. Pezet. Pp. 207, price $3.95 from Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 383 Madison ave., New York 17, N.Y., 1961.

Normal tension is necessary to successful living; abnormal tension is a preliminary to all sorts of impairments of mental and physical health. This book, by a New York City psychiatrist, covers a much larger area than the title suggests—it is a discursive treatise on mental health in general. Whether due to the author or to his collaborator, the book is much "overwritten;" it is replete with passages like this: "Somewhere in the dark confines of one of the Fallopian tubes (a spermatozoon) has been accosted by a female ovum." If one can endure the super-literary style, the book contains much sensible advice and usable information.

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Helen Randolph, and Erma Pixley, M.A.....$2.25

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